

May 25, 1978
Seattle, Wa.

Dear Jim and Vickie:

After I typed that, I thought I should have said "Dear Vickie and Jim", but I know that you are a "Liberated Woman", Vickie so that you will forgive me, or perhaps even congratulate me.

I just read over the article about the Okefenokee Swamp which you sent me in your recent letter. I sure do want to visit it. It brings back so many memories. I remember how it quivered, and I especially agree with the chief guidetelling about the swampers. I had several of them as rodmen, chainmen, and axemen, when I surveyed in the swamp. I remember that they had never been more than a few miles away from the swamp, never seen snow, and had no formal education, but when it came to the swamp, I was the ignorant one, and they were the educated. Part of my survey was out of Moniac, Ga., where we roomed and boarded in a house occupied by two young couples. One day we had home made chicken soup, and Helen was horrified to find chicken claws in the soup. As I remember it, one of the young fellows ran a grocery business, but his main source of profit was selling 100 lb sacks of sugar to the local moonshiners, and trying to hide the names of his customers from the occasional revenue agents. While surveying one day we walked up on a still, and all my crew ran over to it with the idea of sampling the product. However, we then saw a house about 100 yards away, with a man standing on the porch with a rifle in his hands. We got out of there in a hurry. At this location, our survey started at the edge of the swamp and ran in to it. Part of the line was the boundary between Georgia and Florida. Running the line entailed cutting brush and trees that were on line. Each morning we would walk along the cleared line until we got to where we had quit the day before. Finally we were walking in for about three hours, surveying for a couple of hours, and then walking out for another three hours. That was until the swampers persuaded me to allow us to cut across country to go in and out. Of course, I was lost as soon as we left our line, but they knew where we were at all times, and saved us a lot of time. It was hot in the swamp, and when we ran out of water from our canteens, we would hand scoop out a shallow hole in the ground, and the swamp water would slowly seep up to where we could dish it into our mouths with our hands.

It didn't taste very good and was warm but very welcome. Late one afternoon we had an unfortunate occurrence. A young fellow, an axeman, deflected his ax by an overhanging limb while cutting and split his foot longitudinally. The fellows bandaged the foot with shirts, built a stretcher from slender trees, and we carried him over two miles through the swamp back to our car, with four of us at a time taking turns carrying. It was late in the evening before we got him to a hospital.

From Moniac, we moved up to Waycross and were in a motel when we heard the news about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The swamp was much wetter up here. Each morning our crew would get into a couple of canoe-like boats and a man in each would pole us along the "runs" until we reached our survey line. We would then step out into water and walk in water all day, except at lunch time when we would find a mound, just higher than water surface for our meal. Along our survey line, the water depth would vary from ankle top to over our waists. We saw lots of snakes, copperheads, and lots of alligator runs. I saw only one alligator, a baby one that one of the men picked up and held in the air for all of us to see. By this time it was getting cold, and the last few days we were there, we broke through a thin coating of ice when we started in the morning. From there Helen and I moved to Newburyport, where Jimmie was born that spring.

I think that Mary told you about my sister Nellie's receipt of a charted family tree from a man in Sweden. Nellie had met his wife while on a trip to Sweden a couple of years ago. Nellie sent me a copy, and I am anxious to show it to you when we get together. On the chart, I see that my grandmother and that man's wife's grandmother were sisters. However, he had no information about my grandmother and grandfather after they left Sweden for America. Therefore, Nellie made a chart covering my mother's descent. I am enclosing a copy so that you can see how many relatives you have in Minnesota. All of them live in Minneapolis except Genevieve (Genie) and Pierce Wm. (Pete) who live in Rochester.

Mike's campaign is going along. He has now announced and had a big fund raiser last week. Mary said they raised about \$ 8,000.00. Among the visitors were Eugene McCarthy and Brock Adams. Mike may make it to Washington D.C. yet.

I hope that you are both cheering for the Sonics.

Love,

Elmer